

**The Shoulder Clinic of Idaho**  
**Dr. Thomas E. Goodwin**

**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR  
SHOULDER RECONSTRUCTION**

Be assured that I wish to make this shoulder surgical experience as pleasant as possible for you with regards to management of pain and progressive recovery of shoulder function.

Your shoulder surgery has been performed through a small incision on your shoulder. We have utilized a shoulder injection with a long-acting local anesthetic. This may not be completely worn off for 12-24 hours from the time of surgery.

In regards to postoperative comfort, it is very important to begin your pain medications that I have prescribed prior to your shoulder block wearing off. If you are spending the night in the hospital, the nurses will provide this for you. If you plan to go home, I would suggest taking one pain pill every four hours with some food before the block wears off. If needed you may increase that medication, i.e. taking two at a time for pain after the block has worn off. Pain pills may cause you to become constipated, please begin Milk of Magnesia at bedtime after surgery unless you don't need it.

I would advise using ice or a cold pack on your shoulder continuously for 24-48 hours after you arrive home from surgery. You cannot overdo ice as long as it is not applied directly to any exposed skin. It is beneficial to ice for 20 – 30 minutes 3-4 times a day for the first two weeks. Dr. Goodwin recommends a cold therapy unit to assist with this. Our office supplies this unit for up to two weeks for a \$37.00 fee. For the first night or two, you will probably be more comfortable sleeping in a reclining position rather than lying flat in bed. A reclining chair or extra thick pillows are advised.

On the day following surgery, you may remove your arm from the sling to begin elbow, hand and wrist motion. Over the next 2-4 weeks emphasis is on range of motion of your arm and shoulder. Strengthening exercises will be instructed later. Avoid any activities with the operated shoulder other than the instructed motion routine. You may begin using your operated arm to feed yourself and perform general hygiene.

Please keep a bandage on your shoulder for the first 2 weeks. You may shower if you cover the bandage with plastic wrap (Press and Seal works great). Keep the bandage as clean and dry as possible. It is also important to keep your armpit clean and dry to avoid fungal infections. If your armpit becomes red and irritated, apply over-the-counter anti-fungal ointment to the affected area 3-4 times daily.

You may begin driving (preferably an automatic vehicle) after surgery when you are no longer taking pain pills during the day.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at 323-4747 or after 5:00 pm at 866-3441.

Very sincerely,

Thomas E. Goodwin, M.D.